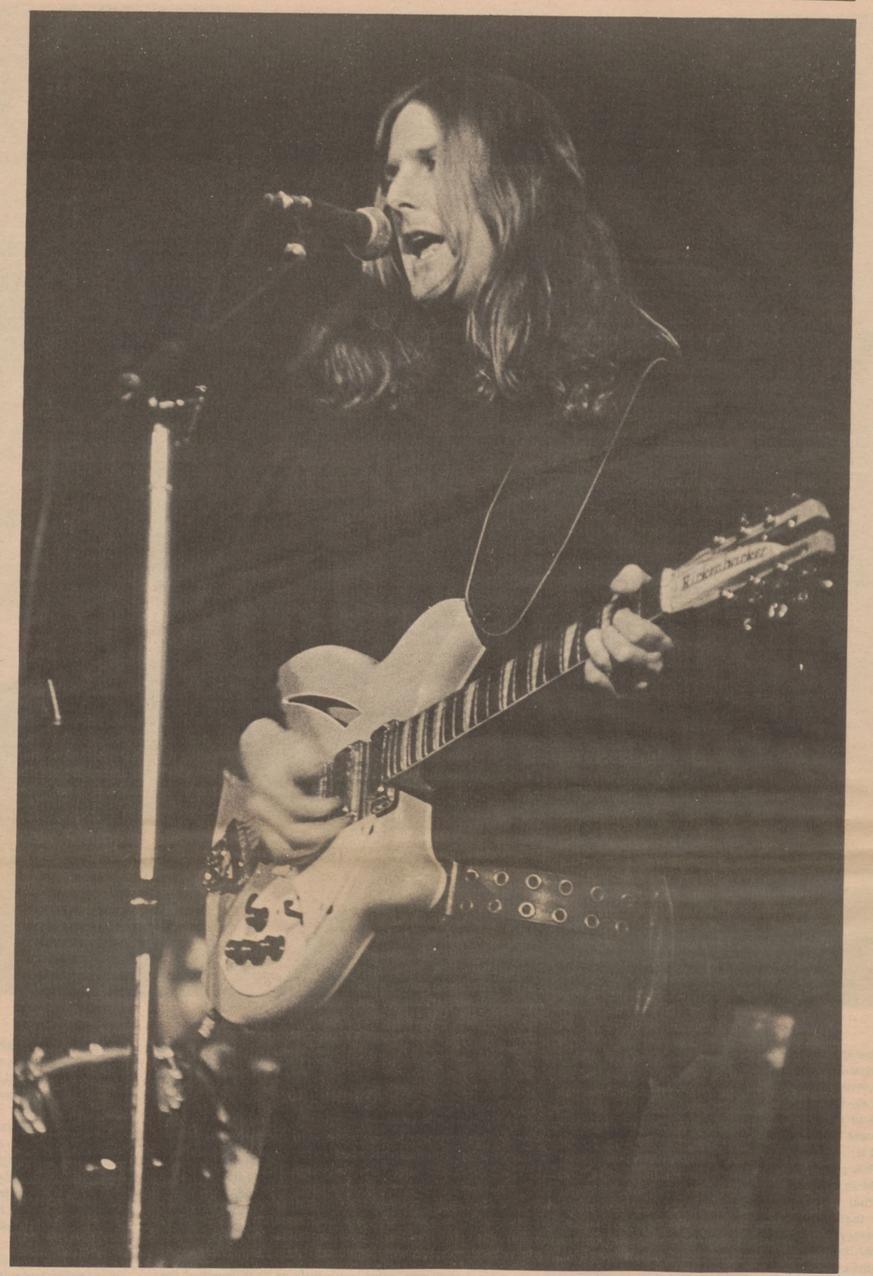
Music/Byrds

# Roger finally makes it to Dixie



## " . . . McGuinn seemed to be everywhere on stage at once, adding a guitar line, a high harmony, or an unusually candid comment . . . "

Just as the Byrds have always had a problem being consistently progressive or consistently good, so have I always gone through similar periods of loving them and hating them. For days on end I simply can't live without them, and then for weeks they can go by unnoticed, just so I know they're still back there if I need them. The April 9 concert at Carolina Coliseum was another beginning to one of those long stretches of devotion.

If the Byrds were a new group things might by necessity be a little different. As I write this it has already been eight days since the Byrds appeared in the Coliseum, and surely by the time you get around to reading this it will be even more than two weeks. Had another group given the same quality performance I'd probably be carrying on and licking their boots and all, but then this was the Byrds, and there's just no need for all that. The Byrds are just good, old friends.

If I had written this immediately after the concert I would have said the same things as today, but I would have probably given the impression that the Byrds were essential to life. They're not, but they're certainly nice to have around.

If there's one automatically obvious aspect of the Byrds concert it's the fact that the group appears to be rejuvenated, possibly even to the point of creating a new interest in themselves. Roger McGuinn, the only original Byrd left in the group, is now 29 and has been touring for close to ten years. At Sunday's concert he actually looked younger than he has in at least the past five years. His dark brown hair was long -- very long -- and his face was clean shaven. He was dressed completely in black and he appeared to have lost at least a little weight. In short, he looked like a new and younger member of the band.

McGuinn seemed to be everywhere on stage at once, adding a guitar line, a high harmony, or an unusually candid comment. Even McGuinn's choice of songs was, to anyone who had ever seen them before, a surprise, and the nonchalant way he chose them ("Oh, what the hell. Let's play another one.") was not at all typical of the Byrds usually compact show.

"You really can't judge the type of show we've been giving lately on just this one," McGuinn said later. "This is the last day of a ten day tour and it's kinda like the last day of a Broadway play. You do things you don't usually do."

Even taking the last-night mania into consideration, the Byrds show was still drastically different from the type show they gave in, say, 1969. Aside from McGuinn's younger than yesterday look, and the relaxed atmosphere, the group actually played an acoustic set in the middle of their electric set, and turned it into the highlight of the show.

Many of the pieces they began the performance with were flawed by very poor harmony, due, in part, to the overbearing volume of the guitar amps. "Chimes of Freedom," for example, has to rely quite a bit on vocal harmonies because the melody alone isn't enough to carry it through. There was no discernable harmony during the song, and hardly any audible vocal.

Also during this opening electric set McGuinn seemed to be letting the other three members of the group solo a bit and take a number of the vocals. It didn't take long to show guitarist Clarence White's excellence with his instruments was even greater than McGuinn's, and Roger didn't seem to mind sharing the spotlight. White's mandolin on "One of America's Great National Pastimes" certainly proved his versatility.

## ". . . I've let too many people walk over me. I really have. . . "

When the group switched to acoustic guitars all of the problems with sound and harmony seemed to immediately clear up. The vocals were clear, the harmony was finally right, the sound was at a clear level, and above all the music in three out of four pieces, was flawless. With White picking out the lead and McGuinn taking the lead vocal, "Tambourine Man" sounded more like Dylan's version of the song than it did their own.

An old Ledbelly song, "Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms" went just the same way. With McGuinn taking the high harmony the song sounded much like the Kingston Trio doing one of their better vocals.

Of course the acoustic set was not without its flaws. The Byrds have never been terribly good at doing the slower country influenced pieces, like "Farther Along." They give these songs a little bit of life, but not much else.

McGuinn said later that the group had been doing an acoustic set for about two years now, but had never done it in this part of the country before. "We've gotten really overexposed in the Northeast, you know?, and we're trying to get some exposure here in the South. It's a more difficult market, we know. We haven't played the acoustic stuff down here because we didn't think it would go over. If we did any more of it we would have to become the New City Ramblers, or something."

Back into another electric set, they did many of their now-standard pieces: "Mr. Spaceman," "Rock 'n' Roll Star," "Chestnut Mare." They also included a number of not-so-standard tunes. "We don't usually do 'Bells Of Rhymney,' " McGuinn said. "I just felt like doing it tonight."

At the end of their show they announced, as usualy, the final "Eight Miles High." As the audience reaction indicated, this was obviously going to be their fifteen minute jam as on the "Untitled" album. Well, it was and it wasn't. It bore no resemblance to either their recorded jam or their studio cut. It was, just like the rest of their show, different, unpredictable, and very, very good.

A long ovation brought them back for a three-song encore which ended with McGuinn high-kicking along to, believe it or not, "Roll Over Beethoven."

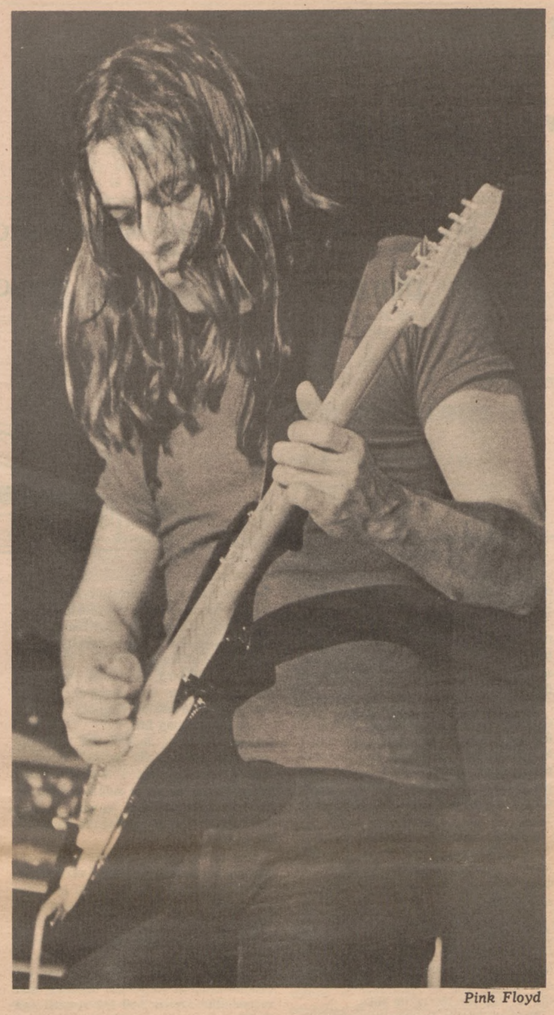
After the concert McGuinn seemed pleased with the reaction to the new-style show. McGuinn has a very uncanny sense of humor in a very dry, sarcastic, almost self-mocking tone. Practically everything he says is in the same soft tone of voice. He places emphasis on his words by leaning forward or smiling. "I've learned a lot from my critics," he grinned. "I'm really going to change. I've let too many people walk all over me. I really have."

He indicated that negotiations between Clive Davis of Columbia Records and Ahmet Ertegun of Atlantic Records seemed to be going well for a recording session with McGuinn and David Crosby. McGuinn said the deal would probably not include the other original Byrds, but would call for one album to be released on Columbia and one on Atlantic.

The present Byrds, however, will not be affected by the sessions. As a matter of fact, they probably won't be affected by anything. I'll just keep on loving and hating them, and hoping that there are more highly spirited, excellent concerts such as this to keep the former feeling more predominant than the latter.

**tom priddy**





*Pink Floyd*

# Cops and concerts

## "How many people would bring a gun to a concert. . . "

Once upon a time there was a rock concert in Township Auditorium featuring Uriah Heep, Cactus, Dream, several thousand kids and, according to one source, "every narc in South Carolina, from the attorney general on down."

"It was like nothing you ever saw before," detective John Dennis of the Columbia Police Department narcotics division told "Columbia Record" reporter Neville Patterson February 28, two days after Columbia's crack narc team busted 21 persons for possession of marijuana. "I don't mean everybody there was using drugs, but people were lighting up everywhere. I guess there were so many smoking dope that they thought we wouldn't arrest them."

In addition to those arrests, Dennis' men "confiscated" -- as the police are fond of calling it -- some smoking papers, pipes, grass, pills, a stilleto and a loaded pistol on the day after the concert at the Auditorium. "We confiscated stuff from all over," Dennis said. "It was under the seats, in corners, in the bathrooms and under trash cans." Some pretty unusual hiding places, you gotta admit.

Too unusual, some insist. "It's horse manure," says one local source. "How many people do you know that would bring a loaded gun to a concert ... then leave it in the building when they leave, knowing all the time the police might find it and start asking you questions. And how many people are gonna leave dope inside," he continued. "It's crap."

Never mind where the "confiscated" material came from though. "The Record" copy desk, recognizing readable copy, splashed Patterson's story all over page one of its February 28 edition. "More Drug Arrests Seen" read the four column front page headline which fell in right under the huge five-column picture that accompanied it. The photo caption should have read, "Columbia, Meet the Drug Culture". The photo itself looked like one of those display kits narcotics detectives use when they talk to PTA groups about "the drug problem". Pipes, papers, grass, a little smack for good measure.

Anyway, while the narcotics boys were able to "confiscate" their cache in peace on Sunday, the arrests on Saturday weren't quite so easy. Fights broke out, and many of those busted for possession of pot also managed charges for resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. "A lot of kids were upset because someone that looked like them (long hair, jeans, etc.) began frisking and arresting them," explained Woody Windham, who promoted the Uriah Heep-Cactus show. "The agents were grabbing girls and frisking them, handling them roughly, and some of the friends they were with ... well ..."

Dennis told Patterson: "We tried to protect ourselves where some persons started pushing us and jumping on the backs of our men.

"All of Columbia's big drug pushers were at that concert," Dennis promised. Curiously, none were arrested.

There was light trouble at the Yes concert in Township a month later, when police waded into the crowd to evict some members of the audience.

Such incidents leave rock an uncertain future in Columbia. "Parents won't let their kids come to the concerts; they don't want them over there with guns and knives and people getting beat up," Windham says.

Profits have dwindled on the last two concerts Windham handled for Funky-Mama productions. Yes, an increasingly popular Top-Forty group with a growing Columbia constituency, drew a poor crowd. And Windham says he netted "about 175 bucks" off the April 16 Pink Floyd concert at Township Auditorium.

Although Windham may have gone to a lot of trouble for 175 dollars, the Pink Floyd set at Township was enjoyable, given the catastrophic events surrounding it.

Originally set for an 8 p.m. starting time, Windham moved it to 9 p.m. Sunday afternoon because Pink Floyd was delayed after a Saturday night show in Hollywood, Fla. Actually, Stonehenge, the absolutely impossible warm-up group, didn't begin until about 9:15 and their unbearable set finally died about 10:30.

Actually the crowd -- what there was of it -- was left gasping by Stonehenge. But that was mainly because Township's on-again, off-again air conditioning unit had succumbed earlier in the evening. "The city said that if we staged another concert in here we were going to hell," Windham joked, speaking of the drug-related police incidents. It was awful close. When a coke fell from the upper balcony and drenched the person sitting behind me, he yelled for the guy above to drop another one. But that was next to impossible since only one concession stand was open, and the lines were therefore quite long. It was hot, in more ways than one.

Anyway, the music was worth it in the end. Floyd opened with a 45-minute number culminating in a tune called "Dark Side of the Moon," which includes a timely tape segment of George Wallace's memorable "... and if I was President and one of them demonstrators laid in front of my car, I'd run 'em over..." speech from the 1968 campaign. Of course, that was before George Wallace became a "Populist."

Later numbers included "Careful With That Ax, Eugene" and Echoes." All the numbers were presented accurately, though the lack of stage movement and excitement was a bit unusual.

**jim walser**

# New releases

There must be a hidden editorial statement lying somewhere far behind the fact that two of the most worthwhile albums released during the first quarter of this year contain not new material destined to affect and influence musicians in the next decades, but old material that has already done more than its share of affecting and influencing.

"The Kink Kronikles" and "History of Eric Clapton" are two thoughtfully collected anthologies of some of the best music of the late sixties and early seventies. And although you may draw any conclusions about the present state of popular music that you wish to make (because I won't draw any), both collections merely help to point out the fact that it's always enjoyable to look back, even though relative boredom may also occassionally force you to do so.

Fortunately for all concerened, "The Kink Kronilees" contains not merely 28 Kink selections pulled from their last several albums, but 28 selections including their most important hits, their 45 rpm

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